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TAGS: PARM PREL KNNP KCFE CWC NL

SUBJECT: NETHERLANDS: A/S DE SUTTER'S MAY 8 MEETING WITH MFA

REF: THE HAGUE 184

Classified By: CDA Michael Gallagher, reasons 1.4 (b,d)

¶11. (C) Summary: During a tour d'horizon discussion at the MFA on May 8, Assistant Secretary of State for Verification, Compliance, and Implementation Paula A. DeSutter addressed Russian President Putin's April 26 remarks and attempts to link the Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE) Treaty to U.S. ballistic missile defense plans. She discussed post-START talks, funding for the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty Organization (CTBTO), Iran, the completion of U.S. chemical weapons stockpile destruction by 2012, and public outreach efforts related to nonproliferation fora such as the NPT and BWC. End summary.

¶12. (U) DeSutter met with MFA Director for Security Affairs Robert de Groot on May 8. Also in attendance for the Dutch were Deputy Head of Nuclear Affairs and Nonproliferation Joan Wiegman and Policy Advisor Walter Wormgoor. U.S. attendees included VCI Technical Advisor Astrid Lewis, and political-military officer Jason Grubb.

Adapted CFE Treaty Linkage

¶13. (C) De Groot began discussion by asking for US views on Russian President Putin's April 26 speech that attempted to link the Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE) Treaty to U.S. ballistic missile defense plans, and suggested Moscow may suspend CFE-related activities as a result. De Groot said Putin's remarks "backfired," as NATO Foreign Ministers at the Oslo ministerial reacted strongly against Putin -- "even the Germans came out publicly against Putin's remarks," he said. DeSutter concurred, and referred to on-going discussions to allay Russian concerns in the NATO-Russia Council (NRC) and bilateral consultations in Moscow. She said the USG remains committed to the Adapted CFE Treaty, and suggested the challenges to persuading Moscow to fulfill its remaining Istanbul Commitments are not insurmountable. That said, she referenced her continued discussions with Russian MFA Director for Security and Disarmament Anatoly Antonov, who is still skeptical that the USG supports the Adapted CFE entry-into-force. DeSutter stated that the Adapted CFE Treaty may need modernization, but noted that entry-into-force will have to take place first. De Groot noted that he will meet with Antonov on May 23 in Moscow.

¶4. (C) Regarding the 1999 Istanbul Commitments, DeSutter raised the alternative peacekeeping force proposal in Moldova. She argued that any peacekeeping force would need to include the Russians, and could be organized through NRC auspices. She added that she had hoped we could have managed to allow the Russians to announce the creation of the force on the anniversary of the NRC. DeSutter added, however, that now some thought would need to be given to avoid the perception that NATO was responding to threats from Moscow. De Groot asked if such a force required EU consideration; DeSutter said the "need to move quickly" suggested EU consideration may not be advisable.

¶5. (C) De Groot noted that the Russians have made the argument to the Dutch that the A/CFE requires revision, and it was not clear if Moscow was pushing first for A/CFE entry-into-force or renegotiation. DeSutter said the Russians appear more interested in renegotiating, and have made the Germans "jittery" by claiming that the United States is not interested. She reiterated that the USG supports A/CFE entry-into-force, and suggested renegotiation would present additional challenges.

Missile Defense

¶6. (C) De Groot noted that the Foreign Ministers' responses at Oslo to Putin on missile defense (MD) "could not have been better." DeSutter described the Russians as the "most consulted people who have allegedly never been consulted." She said Moscow adopted this line primarily because the United States did not capitulate to Russian demands during earlier consultations. She added that we are trying to better understand the Russian argument, and are willing to work with the Russians on MD. She suggested the Plutonium Disposition Agreement might allow the sides to move forward on the Joint Data Exchange Center (JDEC) and additional cooperation with Moscow.

¶7. (C) De Groot asked about next MD steps, especially given "jittery" Berlin and possibly including plans for verification. DeSutter pointed to a number of recent high-level Washington visitors to Moscow as efforts to convince the Russians that the ballistic missile deployment will not be offensive in nature. She expressed concerns about the missile defense public debate in Germany; German op-eds describe MD as "the end of arms control." She acknowledged the need to make the intellectual argument in Berlin that MD provides a third option beyond a pre-emptive strike and retaliation. She suggested convening a MD space policy conference in Berlin.

Post-START

¶8. (C) De Groot raised post-START plans; DeSutter acknowledged discussions with Moscow on post-START scenarios such as confidence and security building and transparency measures. She indicated that neither side wants to simply extend the START Treaty, but both want some continued transparency, and Moscow was pushing for another treaty. "We would like to get to a place with the Russians in which they act like other countries and trust us" without feeling the need to sign and ratify an agreement, DeSutter said. De Groot asked if the post-START scenario will address U.S. missile defense plans; DeSutter said that efforts to include our missile defense plans will not work.

CTBTO

¶9. (C) De Groot noted that the USG was behind in payments for the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty Organization (CTBTO). DeSutter cited conceptual problems with both the treaty and the organization. She said monitoring the globe equally was not productive, the CTBT was not verifiable, and the organization is not ready to perform on-site inspections and susceptible to politicization. She noted the USG currently

has a moratorium on testing, while the reliable warhead program aims to ensure that our arsenal remains dependable. But the USG reserves the right to test, she said, to ensure that our weapons are safe and reliable. De Groot understood our position, but could not understand the suspension following years of financial support for the CTBTO. DeSutter explained that the USG has continued funding for the International Monitoring System (IMS), and not the CTBTO. With other competing priorities, including 22 percent funding for the OPCW and anticipated funding for IAEA inspections in North Korea, it was difficult to prioritize financial support for the CTBTO, she said.

Iran

¶10. (C) DeSutter noted a sizable Dutch trade relationship with Iran, and asked if the Dutch considered doing more on sanctions. De Groot said the trade relationship was not as much as some of the larger EU members such as France and Germany, and almost entirely consists of 1-day old chicken exports. He said the Dutch are viewed within the EU as "hard-line supporters" of economic sanctions on Iran, while EU members such as France and Germany have far too many economic interests to support increased sanctions. De Groot noted that Tehran had recently suggested to the Dutch that Iranian airport maintenance efforts be based in the Netherlands -- "we have not responded to their offer, and continue to be quite tough on Iran," De Groot said. He noted that the Dutch spend 15 million euros per year on a public diplomacy media diversity program in Iran (Comment: Per reftel, the Dutch parliament has authorized 15 million, and the MFA has allocated 13 million. End comment.)

¶11. (C) Referring to the upcoming IAEA report to be released on May 23, de Groot acknowledged Iran will continue to be a "big challenge." However, he said Iran is "overplaying its hand," including recently during the on-going NPT PrepCom in Vienna and in the Middle East Peace Process, and has underestimated the negative reaction from Riyadh. De Groot added that Iran was "meddling in Afghanistan, and making life difficult for all of us" -- the P5 Political Directors have never been so united in opposition to Iran, he noted. That said, he thought additional resolutions and sanctions will be difficult to obtain. Responding to a question on new French President Zarkozy's position on Iran, de Groot suggested that Zarkozy will cooperate, but "will not take the lead" as he focuses more on domestic politics.

Chemical Weapons Convention

¶12. (C) De Groot asked for U.S. views on the 2012 chemical weapon destruction deadline. Lewis noted that the USG is on track for meeting the 45 percent destruction deadline of 31 December 2007 that was adopted by the Conference of the States Parties, and that the USG has opted to tackle destruction of "the hard stuff" first. She explained that the USG learning curve for chemical weapon destruction has increased, including how to deal with mercury contamination, consequences of CW destruction on safety and the environment, and subsequent changes to regulations and the changes of chemical demilitarization technologies. She noted destruction-related problems with all of the CW possessor States Parties.

¶13. (C) Lewis also gave a brief overview of the status of U.S. destruction assistance in Libya. DeSutter suggested the Dutch when possible to encourage the Libyans in their destruction efforts and give them positive reinforcement whenever possible for making their weapons of mass destruction elimination decision. De Groot questioned whether there were adequate controls in place to prevent proliferation from the Libyan stockpile; DeSutter expressed confidence in the OPCW Technical Secretariat.

¶14. (C) De Groot also asked about Lebanon and Syria, and their possible accession to the CWC. Lewis informed the

group of the OPCW focus on universality and the organization interaction with the Middle Eastern countries. She noted that the Lebanese parliament has expressed interest in acceding, but currently is preoccupied with internal politics, and Syria continues to express the usual concerns with Israel. De Groot mentioned that the Dutch have an on-going dialogue with Israel.

¶15. (C) De Groot asked if there was room for the OPCW to do more in the area of counterterrorism. Lewis noted that counterterrorism was not in the OPCW's mandate, but both the U.S. and the OPCW have been focusing on States Parties to fully implement Article VII of the Convention which requires States Parties to enact penal legislation to address possible impacts of entities and non-State actors that employ or use CW on its territories. She noted that inviting debate on amendments in this area might not be the best course of action -- focusing on implementation legislation might be a better strategy.

¶16. (C) DeSutter raised the need to address investigation of alleged use of CW and discussed what the U.S. is doing on this issue. As an example, she cited the number of media reports alleging chemical use in Darfur, Sudan, and stated the need to get access to the information sooner. DeSutter noted the delays in reporting such incidents and that there may be a need to develop a "library" of chemical weapons to better track CW use. She suggested reaching out to NGOs in the area of suspected CW use -- not necessarily to collect evidence, but as a means to better direct the OPCW's efforts.

NPT/BWC/Public Outreach

¶17. (C) De Groot said he found a U.S. intervention at the NPT PrepCom on the Review Conference "tough," and added that "a sense of moving forward" toward the Review Conference would be helpful when managing public and parliament expectations. From that perspective, he said that the Dutch were pleased with the results of the BWC Review Conference. DeSutter asked what more the USG could do from the European and especially Dutch perspective to articulate positive elements of U.S. positions and provide support to our friends on arms control and nonproliferation issues. De Groot suggested "sensitivity" in any U.S. public statement -- "any U.S. statement that leads to the perception -- even if it is a misperception -- that we are standing still could be detrimental," he said. DeSutter suggested a public outreach tour to European capitals by U.S. Ambassador to the Conference on Disarmament Christina Rocca; de Groot said such a tour had promise and the Dutch would give it some thought.

¶18. (U) A/S DeSutter has cleared on this cable.

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